



ENGLISH AS MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION: THE EXPERIENCE OF ARA GROUPS IN LAW



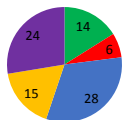
The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) has strongly influenced the implementation of English as Medium of Instruction (EMI) at European universities. EMI is defined as "the use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions where the first language of the majority of the population is not English" (DEARDEN, 2014)

AIM?
Results reached
in the first class
of the Law's ARA
group

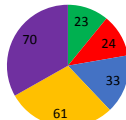
Increasingly, the University of Alicante (UA) is introducing High Academic Achievement (ARA) groups among their degrees. ARA groups are addressed to strengthen the potential of the most outstanding students from the beginning of their university studies by allowing them to take at least 50% of their basic credits in English.

ARA group was implemented in Law in September 2011. Since then, the number of students choosing this group has significantly increased (depending of the subject), most of them are native speakers or students from the Erasmus Programme.

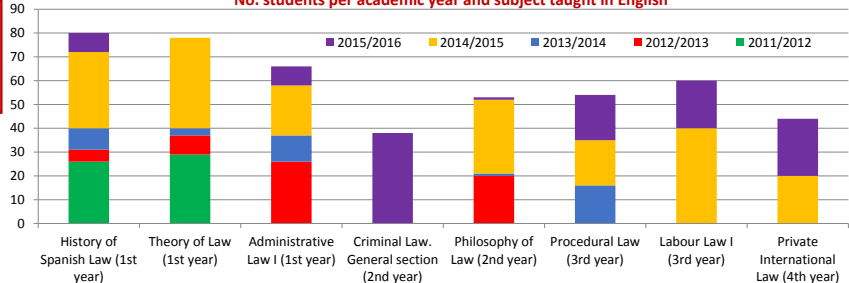
Native or Erasmus students



Average of students



No. students per academic year and subject taught in English



ARA group represents a personal challenge; a way to improve personally and professionally as professors. The main motivation for *lecturers* to take part of this Group has been to take full advantage of their English level and to contribute to a better internationalization of the Law Faculty. They have recognized it has not been easy to assume this role, but they are generally satisfied with the final results. In general, professors taking part of this group have been developing a great international career as researchers, but, in some cases, it has contributed to a more active participation at international conferences. A particular point to be highlighted is the collection of teaching materials about the Spanish legal system, which has been really useful for sharing with foreign professors as a way to spread the knowledge of our legal system.



The main motivation for *students* to take part of this group has been the special mention on their transcript as well as the distinction in relation to other law students; the free provision of a B2+ English course (AULAS); and, the reduced number of students in class, contributing to a more personal teaching.

They have recognized studying law in a foreign language is not an easy task because their support for the subject's study has been based in Spanish books and, sometimes, Spanish words do not exist in the English legal system. Therefore, they wish to be provided with (more) English materials. Nevertheless, they feel, in general terms, satisfied with their choice of studying at the University level through EMI and they consider ARA groups are taken positively into consideration by the business sector.

From the data provided, some points should be considered to keep and improve ARA groups in Law:

TO BE A PARTICIPANT...

EMI does not necessarily pursue linguistic goals. Thus, both lecturers and students should have a good knowledge of English. It would be recommended to prove a *minimum English level* at the beginning of the course (B2). Moreover, not all subjects are suitable for being explained and learnt in English. The selection of subjects should be restricted to those matters that are prone to be taught in English.

...IT IS REQUIRED TO BE FIT

OBSTACLES DURING THE PROCESS...

To be a jurist is essential to have access and work with legislation and case-law in the official language. Explaining the Spanish legal system requires the use of Spanish for a better understanding as well as for an appropriate education of future lawyers and judges. In this regard, introductory lessons and the explanation of general features could be taught and learnt more easily in a foreign language, and it can contribute to a more international perspective of legal issues. Especially, if a Common Law approach is considered. However, specific issues are recommended to be explained in the official language in order to provide students with an excellent education as jurists. For that reason, flexibility may be considered in order to keep a balance between the quality of the education and the increase of academic credits taught in English. That is, increasing the number of subjects taught through EMI, but allowing lessons in either English or Spanish for specific issues.

...OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE...

Basic texts and glossaries are essential for a better understanding of the subject as there are disparities among legal systems. Lecturers are aimed to provide teaching materials to facilitate students the learning of Law in a foreign language. This implies an enormous effort. Therefore, assistance is required not only for preparing the materials but also for reviewing them regularly.

...IS CONTINUOUSLY NEEDED

SPONSORS!

The author would like to thank Prof. Amparo Navarro, Prof. Magdalena Martínez, Prof. Andrés Molina, Prof. David Montoya, Prof. Luis A. Martínez and Ms Estrella del Valle for their contribution to this poster

THERE IS PATH FOR REFORM, BUT
THIS IS THE RIGHT TRACK!